

# The Degree of Faculty's Use and Stimulation of Students' Critical Thinking from the Perspective of English Majors at Al-Quds University

Inas Aref Saleh Naser

Department of Education, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Al-Quds University, P.O. Box: 20002, East Jerusalem-Abu Dies, Palestine

Jamal Subhi Ismail Nafi<sup>\*</sup>

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Al-Quds University, P.O. Box: 20002, East Jerusalem-Abu Dies, Palestine

Ibrahim Moh'd Abdel-rahman Arman

Department of Education, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Al-Quds University, P.O. Box: 20002, East Jerusalem-Abu Dies, Palestine

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking skills in the English Department at Al-Quds University. To achieve the objective of the study, a questionnaire consisting of 21 items was designed and applied to the study sample, consisting of 95 students in the English Department at Al-Quds University in Palestine. In addition to that, 11 students from the same department were interviewed. The results of the study showed that the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking skills in the English Department were medium, and that there were no statistically significant differences in the degree of the faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking due to gender and performance, and the presence of significant differences was due to level and in favor of third year English majors. The results of the students' interview also showed that there were skills that teachers used largely as the skill of interpretation and analysis, and that there were skills which were fairly used such as the skill of inference, and the assessment skill was low. In light of the results of the study, the researchers recommended the need for further similar studies on different samples and departments, the need of including a single course in critical thinking in the Faculty of Arts, and the need to hold workshops for teachers on critical thinking skills, especially the skill of assessment.

**Keywords:** Use and stimulation, critical thinking, English majors, Al-Quds University

## 1. Introduction

Critical thinking is a term that is worth investigation and analysis since most human beings are capable of thinking critically about any given subject. Of course, they may use their instincts and feelings to approach a certain topic, but the hidden aspects of life can be revealed only through investigation and exploration, which requires activating the intellect and thinking beyond the words' denotations. Before any evaluation of previous research about this topic takes place, it is worthy to define the term critical thinking and see how it is defined and interpreted by various researchers and scholars.

According to Scriven and Paul (1987), critical thinking is an intellectual process of "actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" (15). The researchers further added that critical thinking has two components which are: seeking and treating information in a particular way and not merely receiving it, and the continuous use of the skills that guide behavior and help in judging the information gathered through various ways, and not merely having those skills.

Paul and Elder (2008), on the other hand, defined critical thinking as the ability to think about any subject, content, or problem; and this improves the thinker's quality of his/her thinking by training his/her mind to exercise the use of logic, and it also enables him/her to impose intellectual standards on his/her thought about that subject. The result of the exercise of this activity called "critical thinking", according to the above scholars, is that the thinker will be able to raise vital questions, gather, interpret and evaluate sources of information, think with an open mind, and what is more important is that he/she will be able to communicate effectively with others to find solutions to different problems.

Facione (2011: 9-10) as cited in Alldumairi and Aljabari (2015: 421) argues that "critical thinking is good thinking which is opposite to 'irrational, illogical thinking.'" He, according to Alldumairi and Aljabari (2015), quotes from the consensus statement of the national panel the following as core critical thinking skills:

- Interpretation: " To comprehend and express the meaning or significance of a wide variety of experiences, situations, data, events, judgments , conventions, beliefs, rules, procedures, or criteria".

- Analysis: "To identify the intended and actual inferential relationships among statements, questions, concepts, descriptions, or other forms of representation intended to express belief, judgment, experiences, reasons, information, or opinions".
- Inference: "to identify and secure elements needed to draw reasonable conclusions; to form conjectures and hypotheses; to consider relevant information and to reduce the consequences flowing from data, statements, principles, evidence, judgments, beliefs, opinions, concepts, descriptions, questions, or other forms of representation".
- Evaluation: "to assess the credibility of statements or other representations that are accounts or descriptions of a person's perception, experience , situation, judgment, belief, or opinion; and to assess the logical strength of the actual or intended inferential relationships among statements, descriptions, questions, or other forms of representation".
- Explanation: "To state and to justify that reasoning in terms of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, and contextual considerations upon which one's results were based, and to present one's reasoning in the form of cogent argument".
- Self-regulation: "Self-consciously to monitor one's cognitive activities, the elements used in those activities, and the results educed, particularly by applying skills in analysis, and evaluation to one's own inferential judgments with a view toward questioning, confirming, validating, or correcting either one's reasoning or one's results."

In a study on critical thinking and education, Glaser (1941) defined critical thinking as follows: "The ability to think critically, as conceived in this volume, involves three things: (1) an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experiences, (2) knowledge of the methods of logical inquiry and reasoning, and (3) some skill in applying those methods" (29).

Thus the above definitions indicate the fact that critical thinking is a complex process, which requires efforts and time on the part of the thinker. It is not easy to define it, for it means different things to different people. If one considers the past with the eye of the present, he/she could see that the ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were critical thinkers in the real sense of the word. This suggests that critical thinking is not new to people, or not connected with the development of science and technology, as some believe it to be so. Take for example Socrates' famous words "*The unexamined life is not worth living*" These words imply that critical thinking was applied to all subjects and aspects of life at that time, before the advent of human civilization.

Therefore, when teaching college courses, an instructor has more to do than just teach linguistics and literature; he/she has to work on the students' abilities to make them think critically about the subject under discussion, and not just memorize or accept the information they receive without judging and evaluating it. The question that comes to mind is: how much teachers encourage their students to think critically? This paper is an attempt to know and measure the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of students' critical thinking from the perspective of English majors at Al-Quds University.

There are a lot of studies that investigate and explore the importance of critical thinking skills in the English classroom, because of its positive influence in developing the students' English language skills and make them competent learners of English as a foreign language.

Karimova (2013) explored the effect of a fourth-level foundation English course upon the development of students' critical thinking in the fifth-level foundation English course taught at a major Kazakhstani University. 37 first-year central Asian students, enrolled in the foundation English 5 course in the fall of the academic year 2011-2012, participated in the study. Besides, 7 faculty members participated in a small survey with four open-ended questions to get answers for their beliefs about critical thought and questioning as well as observations of the possession and use and stimulation of critical thinking skills demonstrated by English learners. In the researcher's opinion, "the development of learners' critical thought is a crucial component of higher learning at many Kazakhstani universities" (449). Thus, much effort is spent by the teachers on training students how to approach a subject and think critically about it and express themselves in English. To achieve that, various class activities should be organized by the instructors, who should assign students works to do independently at home. The results of the study indicated that many of the learners, who have been taught various critical thinking skills in the lower-level foundation English course, asked less factual questions and more preferential and almost the same number of judgment questions compared with those asked by the newcomers, who have not been exposed to any critical thinking skills, of whatsoever.

On a similar vein, Tsui (1999) conducted a study to assess the types of courses and teaching techniques that enhance critical thinking among students. According to the researcher, the most important educational objective is to make students think critically about any academic subject they undertake to study. This will develop both the learners' abilities and the whole educational system, added Tsui. According to Smith (1977), as cited in Tsui (1999: 188), "instruction matters but that the failure to find meaningful differences among various instructional techniques is due to limitations in traditional research approaches". Tsue (1999) is of the opinion

that changes that make the courses more influential and effective in meeting the educational objective of making students think critically can be possible only if the instructional techniques are identified and utilized in the educational system.

The results of the study revealed that taking “writing courses, interdisciplinary courses, history courses, science courses, women's studies courses, math courses, foreign language courses, ethnic studies courses, and enrolling in an honors program are each positively associated with self-reported growth in critical thinking” (192), while multiple-choice questions didn't contribute to the development of students' critical thinking skills, according to the researcher. Essay questions are also of great importance in developing students' critical thinking skills in the researcher's point of view.

Rabak (1988) tried to examine the fact why integrating critical thinking skills into the classroom is necessary, and how theory and practice are related to teaching. The population of the study consisted of all teachers of English as a foreign language, while the sample comprised of some classes that were observed by the researcher at schools. The tool that was used by the researcher was observation. The results of the study gave evidence that both the instructor and student should practice critical thinking in class. The teacher may ask questions in class, as a start to the process of critical thinking. And students with high critical thinking abilities should encourage the less fortunate students to think critically. The researcher also concluded that “content and the art of in vocational and academic areas are not static” (56). They are processes which can develop as the learning process goes on.

Grauerholz and Bouma-Holtrop (2003) attempted to assess the critical thinking abilities of students within the sociological literature. They reviewed ways in which sociologists have conceptualized and measured critical thinking. According to them, critical sociological thinking refers to the ability to logically and reasonably evaluate an agreement. To achieve the objective of the study and to collect data, 207 students from four undergraduate sections of a Sociology of Marriage and Family course were tested over three semesters. As for the tools of the study, all the four sections were given the same final exam questions to test their critical thinking abilities. The results of the study proved that few students knew what sociological critical thinking really is.

### *1.1 Statement of the Problem*

The development of thinking and critical thinking has become a primary goal in the teaching-learning process. Harnadek indicated that every student can learn how to think critically if he/she has been given enough training and authentic practice (Jarawan, 2002). That is because critical thinking plays a major role in creating a balanced personality capable of solving the problems encountered and creating the ability to logically analyze the available information and data in order to determine whether they are true so as to take the appropriate decision. The teacher may play the most important role in the achievement of critical thinking through the exercise of his skills during the teaching of his/her students. From here, the researchers derived the problem of the research which is to identify the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students.

### *1.2 Questions of the Study*

This study tries to answer the following two questions:

1. What is the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students?
2. Do the mean scores vary the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students due to gender, level and performance?

### *1.3 Hypotheses of the Study*

The study attempted to test the following hypotheses:

1. There were no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ) in the mean scores of the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students due to gender.
2. There were no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ) in the mean scores of the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students due to level.
3. There were no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ) in the mean scores of the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students due to performance.

### *1.4 Objectives of the Study*

This study aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Determine the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-

Quds University from the perspective of students.

2. Know the effect of each of the variables (gender, level and performance) in determining the degree of the faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University.

### *1.5 Significance of the Study*

This study is considered important for the following reasons:

1. The nature of the subject matter, as it deals with the critical thinking skills.
2. This study may help to develop the process of teaching English at the university.
3. The results of this research may contribute in solving problems faced by the students in the study of the English language, and improve the level and quality of learning.
4. This study may open up ideas to conduct research and other studies on other types of thinking.

### *1.6 Limitations of the Study*

The study is limited to a sample of students from the English Department at Al-Quds University in Palestine in the academic year 2015/2016. The study is also limited to the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the Department of English, and it shows students' responses to the statements related to critical thinking in the questionnaire, and the results of their responses to the interview.

## **2. Methods and Procedures**

### *2.1 Methods*

The study followed the descriptive analytical approach to commensurate with its objectives in determining the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of the department students through the application of the research tools (questionnaire and interview) on the sample to achieve the results that answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

### *2.2 Population of the Study*

The study population included all the 245 students in the English Department at Al-Quds University in the second semester of the academic year 2015/2016 and the number was 245 students.

### *2.3 Sample of the Study*

The study sample consisted of 95 students who were selected randomly by (40%) of the study population and Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	Level of Variable	Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	30	31.5%
	Female	65	68.5%
<b>Level</b>	Second	27	28.4&
	Third	34	35.7%
	Fourth and above	34	35.7%
<b>Performance</b>	Low	17	17.9%
	Average	73	76.9%
	High	5	5.2%
<b>Total</b>		95	100%

### *2.4 Variables of the Study*

-Independent Variables:

Gender, namely: (male and female). Level of students, namely: (second, third, fourth and over). Performance, namely: (low, average and high).

-Dependent Variable:

The degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department.

### *2.5 Instruments of the Study*

1. Questionnaire:

The researchers designed a questionnaire by taking advantage of questionnaires that were designed in previous studies as samples (Hilat et al., 2009); (Kitami, 2003) and (Solomon, 2012) until they came out with their questionnaire's final form. And the reliability of the questionnaire was tested by exposing it to different experienced arbitrators in the same field and specialization. The statements of the questionnaire have reached in their final form 21 statements, and the reliability coefficient was calculated (Cronbach's alpha) and it was (0.88).

## 2. Interview:

The researchers have conducted an interview with 10 students from the English Department by posing five questions that included the different critical thinking skills. And the reliability of the interview was tested by exposing its questions to reviewers in the same field, who provided some comments and suggestions that were considered seriously. As for the stability of the interview, it has been calculated through the consistency of the corresponding account over time and consistency over people.

A: Stability over time: an interview with a student was conducted and the same student was re-interviewed two weeks later, and the analysis and extraction ratio of the agreement between both interviews was done by using the equation (Cooper), and the ratio agreement has reached (0.89).

B: Stability over people: The researchers conducted an interview with a student, and it was analyzed by the three researchers; after the analysis, the results were compared and the ratio agreement which was calculated by using the equation (Cooper, as cited in Jaber, 2002: 69). And it was like this:

$$\text{Ratio agreement} = \frac{\text{number of times in the agreement}}{\text{number of times in the agreement} + \text{number of times in the disagreement}} \times 100\%$$

The ratio of the agreement is (0.86), which confirms the existence of an agreement for the purposes of the study.

## 2.6 Statistical Analysis

The statistical treatment of the data was done by using numbers, percentages, averages, standard deviations, t-test, One Way Analysis of Variance, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient and the SPSS. The following correction key has been adopted:

SMA  $\leq$  2.33 Low

SMA medium  $\leq$  3.66 < 2.33

SMA high < 3.66

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 1. What is the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students?

To answer this question, the researchers calculated the mean scores and the standard deviation, where the mean score was 3.54 and the standard deviation was 0.54, which is moderate. The researchers believe that the degree of the faculty's practice of critical thinking in the English Department was found to be moderate, which indicated that the critical thinking skills are not practiced to a high degree from the perspective of students, but there are many other skills that were used to a low degree.

This result agreed with Smith's (2008) study which showed that the rate of behavioral patterns related to critical thinking was 21, and that the percentage of the teachers who are turning towards the teaching critical thinking was about 8%, which indicated the low practice of critical thinking skills on the part of the teachers.

The results of the study also agreed with Pratt's (2007) study which showed that 18% of social studies' teachers tried to develop the creative skills and critical thinking in an acceptable manner. And 6% of the teachers contributed to the development of thinking skills, and the range was between 70-85%, while the remaining teachers had no positive effect with regard to contribution.

Khreishe's (2001) study revealed that the level of the contribution of secondary school teachers was below the acceptable level, educationally. And the result of the study agreed with the study of Sulaiman (2012), which showed that the degree of history teachers were intermediate.

### 2. Do the mean scores vary the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students due to gender, level and performance?

The researchers converted this question into null hypotheses at the level of statistical significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ).

#### First Null Hypothesis

There were no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ) in the mean scores of the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students due to gender. And to test the hypothesis, the researchers used the analysis of the independent samples as in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of the analysis of the independent samples due to gender.

Variable	Number	SMA	Std. Deviation	Degree of Freedom	Calculated T Value	Calculated Level of Significance
Male	30	3.70	0.49	93	1.94	0.056
Female	65	3.47	0.55			

The table also indicates that the significance of the calculated level (0.056) is greater than the level of

statistical significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ), and the null hypothesis was accepted, and that there were no differences in the averages in the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University due to gender.

The researchers attributed this result to the fact that both sexes exist in the same league and are subjected to the same conditions and the same educational environment, in addition to that, they are receiving education from the same teachers, and the same teaching methods are applied to them, and therefore their responses were close, resulting in a lack of statistically significant differences.

This study agreed with the studies of Massad (1997) and Khreishah (2001), which showed no differences due to gender. And, it disagreed with the study of Badr (2016) and showed that the differences in the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the History Department from the perspective of students was in favor of the females.

#### Second Null Hypothesis

There were no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ) in the mean scores of the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students due to level.

The researchers calculated the averages, standard deviations, as in Table 3.

Table 3: Averages and standard deviations due to level

Level	Number	Mean Scores	Std. Deviation
2	27	3.46	0.53
3	34	3.75	0.45
4	34	3.38	0.56
Total	95	3.54	0.53

The researchers tested the hypothesis by using the one-way analysis of variance as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Results of the one-way analysis of variance due to level.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Average Squares	Calculated P Value	Calculated Level of Significance
Between groups	2.43	2	1.22	4.49	0.014
Within groups	24.96	92	0.27		
Total	27.39	94			

Table 4 shows that the significance of the calculated level of value (0.014) is less than the level of statistical significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ), and therefore, the null hypothesis has been rejected and the alternative one, which shows that there were differences in averages for the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University due to level, has been accepted.

And to reveal for whom the benefit of those differences was, the advanced statistical analysis Post hoc (LSD), was used, as shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Analysis of LSD due to level.

Level of Variables		Difference of Averages
Second	Third	-0.28* 0.077
	Fourth	
Third	Second	
	Fourth	
Fourth	Second	0.28*
	Third	0.36*

Statistically significant\*

Comparing the second level with the third, it was in favor of the third, and comparing the third with the fourth and above, it was in favor of the third. The researchers attribute this result to third-year students' knowledge and experience with their teachers more than other students. In addition to that, they have enough time to meet with their teachers, attend classes and follow-up, more than fourth year students, who are usually busy with registering a large number of credit hours for the purpose of graduation.

And the result of this study agreed with the study of Badr (2016), which concluded the existence of differences in the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking due to level, and in favor of the first hypothesis.

#### Third Null hypothesis:

There were no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ) in the mean scores of the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University from the perspective of students due to performance.

The researchers calculated the averages and standard deviations, as in Table 6

Table 6: Averages and standard deviations due to performance

Performance	Number	Mean Scores	Std. Deviation
1	17	3.75	0.51
2	73	3.50	0.55
3	5	3.37	0.42
Total	95	3.54	0.53

And to test this hypothesis, the one-way analysis of variance has been used, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Results of the one-way analysis of variance due to performance.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Average of Squares	Calculated P Value	Calculated Level of Significance
Between groups	1.01	2	0.51	1.77	0.18
Within groups	26.38	92			
Total	27.39	94	0.29		

Table 7 shows that the significance of the calculated value level is (0.18) greater than the level of the statistical significance which is ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ), and the null hypothesis, which indicates that there were no statistically significant differences in the averages of the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the Department of English at Al-Quds University due to performance.

The researchers attributed this result to the fact that the nature of critical thinking skills may not depend primarily on the performance of the learner's level as much as it depends on the ability and skill in interpretation and analysis, and that the teachers' practice of critical thinking skills was not to a remarkable degree, which distinguishes students at all levels of performance.

This result differs from the study of Badr (2016), which indicated that the presence of significant differences in the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking due to performance, and is in favor of high-performance members.

### Results of the Interview

The researchers interviewed 11 students from the English Department; five questions were addressed to them, and the results of students' responses were as follows:

#### 1. Does the teacher use the skill of interpretation in teaching? How?

Of the entire interview, all the students agreed that teachers use the skill of interpretation significantly, as the teachers ask questions and ask the students to develop answers, they open the way for students to reflect on the questions and the problem, but the majority of the students noticed that this skill was used by most teachers in specialization courses (English requirements), and in the fourth year.

#### 2. Does the teacher use the skill of inference in teaching? How?

A small number of students (4 students) agreed that the teachers help them to infer, and they ask them to use the available evidence to achieve the results; meanwhile, 7 students said that a small number of teachers allot them enough time to infer, ask questions and express ideas.

#### 3. Does the teacher use the skill of the survey in teaching? How?

Eight students said that most teachers begin their classes by displaying it as an issue or a problem that needs to be discussed, and he/she listens to students' points of view and with their help, he/she reaches a conclusion. And rarely the teacher gives information without debate and often he/she reaches the result through students' thoughts, while around 5 of the students said that they need more time to present their ideas and discuss them, and most teachers do not allow them enough time. In addition to that, teachers do not listen to and discuss the views of all students and rarely encourage them to debate.

#### 4. Does the teacher use the skill of analysis in teaching? How?

All the students agreed that their teachers use the skill of analysis, since the nature of their courses requires them to analyze texts and ideas, but they suggested that the text itself is insufficient; therefore, teachers direct them towards libraries and research sites for extra reading and better analysis. For example, instead of reading three novels in the course and analyzing them superficially, reading one novel only and going to libraries and research sites to read about what has been said and written on the subject of the novel and analyze and discuss it, is preferable and recommended, for it strengthens more than one skill.

#### 5. Does the teacher use the skill of assessment in teaching? How?

Most students stressed the fact that most teachers use the skill of assessment very little, as the teachers do not direct them to the right sources of information, and most of their duties are no more than a discussion of a topic in any given course they are taking, and that they wanted to use references and the internet as a primary reference. In addition to that, they do not distinguish between the primary source the secondary one, as they are

not allowed to write a reflective paper on the issues raised in the course, and they are not consulted on the mechanism of assessment in the assignments required of them in the course, adding that most of the teachers do not accept criticism and do not allow students to ask him/her questions.

And to confirm the results more, the researchers put some of the critical thinking skills in a newspaper interview and questioned 11 students individually about their teachers' use of and stimulation of critical thinking skills, and the percentages were calculated, and the results, according to students' opinions, are shown in Table 8 below:

Table 8 shows the results of the students' interview and the percentage of the faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking skills:

#	Skill	Large number of teachers practice it		Moderate number of teachers practice it		A small number of teachers practice it	
		Number of Supportive Students	Percentage	Number of Supportive Students	Percentage	Number of Supportive Students	Percentage
1	The teacher encourages students to meditate.	1	%9	4	%36.3	6	%54.5
2	The teacher creates an encouraging and stimulating classroom environment for criticism.	0	%0	8		3	%27.2
3	He/she gives enough time to think about a solution, after subtracting the problem.	6	%54.5	4	%36.3	1	%9
4	The teacher clarifies the question to students.	8	%72.7	2	%18.1	1	%9
5	He/she asks open-ended questions.	9	%81.8	1	%9	1	%9
6	The teacher encourages students to ask scientific questions that support their ideas.	0	%0	1	%9	10	%90.9
7	He/she recognizes the needs and problems of the students and proposes solutions to them.	1	%9	7	%63.6	3	%27.2
8	The teacher asks students to summarize their ideas in their own language.	6	%54.5	4	%36.3	1	%9
9	He/she encourages the curiosity of students.	1	%9	8	%72.7	2	%18.1
10	The teacher motivates students to research and investigate.	1	%9	2	%18.1	8	%72.7
11	He/she teaches the lesson in the form of a problem.	1	%9	9	%81.8	1	%9
12	The teacher directs students to new and old sources of information.	9	%81.8	1	%9	1	%9
13	He/she differentiates between primary source and secondary sources.	0	%0	0	%0	11	%100
14	The teacher helps students to develop hypotheses and choose the best.	9	%81.8	1	%9	1	%9
15	He/she allows respect for conflicting opinions.	9	%81.8	1	%9	1	%9
16	The teacher respects students' questions regardless of their level and nature.	5	%45.4	5	%45.4	1	%9
17	He/she encourages students to take decisions.	1	%9	3	%27.2	7	%63.6
18	He/she asks students to draw conclusions from the available evidence.	5	%45.4	5	%45.4	1	%9
19	The teacher assesses the conclusions that his/her students draw.	4	%36.3	5	%45.4	2	%18.1
20	He/she evaluates the ideas and information provided by the students to solve the problem.	4	%36.3	5	%45.4	2	%18.1
21	The teacher encourages students to hold a group discussion during the process of choosing and testing the hypotheses.	5	%45.4	5	%45.4	1	%9

As has been seen from the students' interviews and Table 8 above, there are critical thinking skills practiced by the faculty in the English Department significantly, like the skill of asking and clarifying questions,

respecting conflicting opinions, helping students in formulating hypotheses in order to solve problems, allowing students to summarize their own ideas and respecting the level of their questions and encouraging them to participate in class discussion. There are some skills that most students agreed upon the fact that they are used very little by their faculty such as: encouraging them to meditate, motivating them to love research and survey, asking questions that support their points of view, differentiating between the primary and secondary sources of information and encouraging them to take decisions on their own.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study has concluded that the degree of faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department English at Al-Quds University is moderate. There are no statistically significant differences in the degree of the faculty's use of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University due to gender. There are statistically significant differences in the degree of the faculty's use and stimulation of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University due to level and it was in favor of third year students. There are no statistically significant differences in the degree of the faculty's use of critical thinking in the English Department at Al-Quds University due to performance. The results of the students' interview showed that there were skills that teachers use and stimulate largely, such as the skill of interpretation and analysis, and that there are skills which were used moderately such as the skill of inference and reasoning; while the skill of assessment came to a low degree.

#### 5. Recommendations

In light of the results of the study, the researchers recommended the following:

1. Programs for the development of critical thinking skills of faculty members at the university should be prepared and organized.
2. There is a need to instate a course in critical thinking on the Graduation Plan to be offered by the English Department as a department requirement, or make it a university requirement.
3. Conducting a similar study on other faculty members at other Palestinian universities.
4. Taking interest in university educational skills such as inference, evaluation and analysis in general, and inference and interpretation in particular, and the rest of the general thinking skills should be taken care of.
5. The need to use and stimulate critical thinking skills by the teacher in class by asking questions and helping students in mastering the skills of analysis, interpretation and expressing an opinion.
6. Conducting workshops, and training students on how to think critically.

#### Conflict of Interests

The authors have declared no conflict of interests.

#### Acknowledgments

Our deepest appreciation goes to the Deanship of Scientific Research at Al-Quds University for its support and encouragement. Not to forget all faculty members in the English Department for their help. Special thanks to all English majors for their cooperation during the process of carrying out the study. To all of them, we offer our deepest respect and gratitude.

#### References

- Aldumairi, E. & Aljabari, N. A. (December 2015). Arab EFL Students' Application and Awareness of Critical Thinking in College Writing: A Case Study. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 6(4), 419-431. Retrieved from <http://awej.org/images/AllIssues/Volume6/Volume6number4Decmber/32.pdf>
- Almasad, I. (1997). Knowledge of social studies teachers for the skills of critical thinking and the extent of exercising them. Unpublished Master's thesis, Yarmouk University, Jordan.
- Bader, S. (2016). The extent of faculty's use of critical thinking at the departments of History at Palestinian Universities from the Perspective of students. Unpublished Master's thesis. Al-Quds University, Palestine.
- Facione, P. A. (2011). *Critical thinking: What it is and why it counts?* Millbrae, CA: Insight Assessment.
- Grauerholz, L. & Bouma-Holtrop, S. (Oct., 2003). Exploring Critical Sociological Thinking Source, *Teaching Sociology*, 31(4), 485-496. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3211372>
- Glaser, E. M. (1941). *An Experiment in the Development of Critical Thinking*, Teacher's College, Columbia University.
- Hilat et al. (2009). The effect of using historical documents in the development of critical thinking skills - tenth grade students in the History curriculum/ course, *The Jordanian Journal for Educational Sciences*, 5(3).
- Jaber, A. J. (2002). Contemporary trends and experiences in evaluating the performance of the student and the teacher. Cairo: Arabic Thought House (Dar Ilfiker Al'arabi).



- Jarawan, F. A. (2002). Creativity. Amman, Jordan.
- Karimova, D. (2013). The Use of Literary Texts and Questioning to Examine First-Year Central Asian Students' Critical Thinking Skills. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 4(4), 448 -461. Retrieved from <http://www.awej.org/images/AllIssues/Volume4/Volume4Number4Dec2013/26.pdf>
- Khreisheh, A. (2001). Contributing history teachers at the secondary level in the development of the skills of critical and creative thinking among their students, Journal of Educational Research Center, 19, Qatar University, Qatar.
- Paul, R & Elder, L. (2008). *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools*, Foundation for Critical Thinking Press.
- Pratt, D. (2007). Focus on critical and creative thinking skills across the curriculum. Retrieved from: <http://44.scholar.Google.Com/scholar?9=extent.Html>. 15/11/2008.
- Qtami, N. (2003). Teaching thinking to children. Dar Ilfikar for Printing and Publishing, Amman, Jordan.
- Rabak, T. (June 1988). Beyond Theory: The Art and Practice of Critical Thinking. *Journal of Correctional Education* (1974- ), 39(2), 54-57. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23294152>
- Scriven, M. & Paul, R. (Summer 1987), A statement presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform.
- Sulaiman, J. (2012). The degree of history teachers' use of the critical thinking skills at thesecondary level. *Journal of Damsacus University*, 28(2), 97-154.
- Smith, J. (2008). Teachers to exercise the degree of critical thinking skills. *The Journal of Critical Behavior*, 23(1), 75- 103.
- Tsui, L. (Apr. 1999). Courses and Instruction Affecting Critical Thinking. *Research in Higher Education*, 40(2), 185-200. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40196338> [www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766](http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766).